

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (previously presented) Covering for arranging on a ground surface, in particular a floor, comprising:

at least two parallel form-retaining covering parts which are mutually connected along adjacent side edges and which have a backing side directed toward the ground surface and a visual side remote therefrom, wherein the two side edges take a step-like form with an inner and an outer edge segment such that the first covering part has a protruding backing side and the second covering part has an overhanging visual side,

which covering parts are provided with co-acting coupling elements placed along the side edges, wherein the coupling element of the first covering part is a groove which is formed in the protruding backing side and at least open to the visual side, and the coupling element of the second covering part forms a tongue extending from the overhanging visual side at least to the ground surface, which groove and tongue each have an at least partly curved profile, and wherein the groove undercuts the inner edge segment of the first covering part and the tongue protrudes beyond the outer edge segment of the second covering part,

wherein the undercut of the groove and the part of the tongue protruding beyond the edge each have an at least partly chamfered profile, and wherein the outer edge segment of the first covering part and the inner edge segment of the second covering part define a gap in the mutually connected position of the covering parts,

wherein each covering part is constructed from a relatively thick base layer forming the backing side and, connected thereto, a top layer forming the visual side, and the coupling elements are formed in the base layer, wherein the groove and the tongue each form profiles complementary to each other whereby a form-fitting connection between the covering parts can be realized.

2. (previously presented) Covering as claimed in claim 1, wherein the inner edge segment of the first covering part and the outer edge segment of the second covering part run substantially transversely of the visual side of the relevant covering part.

3. (previously presented) Covering as claimed in claim 1, wherein the at least partly curved profile forms a segment of a circle.

4. (previously presented) Covering as claimed in claim 1, wherein a chamfered surface is defined between the visual side and the side edge of at least one of the covering parts.

5. (previously presented) Covering as claimed in claim 1, wherein each covering part has two parallel step-like side edges, the one of which is embodied with the protruding backing side with groove, and the other with the overhanging visual side with tongue.

6. (previously presented) Covering as claimed in claim 5, wherein each covering part has two mutually parallel end edges which enclose an angle with the side edges and which are provided with secondary coupling elements.

7. (previously presented) Covering as claimed in claim 6, wherein the two end edges also take a step-like form such that the one covering part has a protruding backing side and the other covering part has an overhanging visual side, the secondary coupling element of the one covering part is a recess formed on the top of the protruding backing side, and the secondary coupling element of the other covering part is a protrusion formed under the overhanging visual side.

8. (currently amended) Covering as claimed in claim 1, wherein the top layer is formed from a high-grade type of wood, and has a thickness of at least 4 mm, ~~preferably at least 2.5 mm and most preferably~~ in the order of 4 mm.

9. (previously presented) Covering part for use in a covering as claimed in claim 1, said covering part having a backing side to be directed toward a ground surface and a visual side remote therefrom, said covering part further having two parallel side edges which each take a step-like form with an inner and an outer edge segment such that the covering part has a protruding backing side along a first one of the side edges and an overhanging visual side along the other, second side edge,

said covering part being provided with co-acting coupling elements placed along the respective side edges, wherein the coupling element along the first side edge is a groove which is formed in the protruding backing side and at least open to the visual side, and the coupling element along the second side edge forms a tongue extending from the overhanging visual side at least to the ground surface, which groove and tongue each have an at least partly curved profile, and wherein the groove undercuts the inner edge segment of the first side edge and the tongue protrudes beyond the outer edge segment of the second side edge, and said covering part being constructed from a relatively thick base layer forming the backing side and, connected thereto, a top layer forming the visual side, the coupling elements being formed in the base layer, wherein the undercut of the groove and the part of the tongue protruding beyond the edge each have an at least partly chamfered profile, and wherein the outer edge segment of the first side edge and the inner edge segment of the second side edge are dimensioned such as to define a gap in the mutually connected position of two of these covering parts,

wherein the groove and the tongue each form profiles complementary to each other whereby a form-fitting connection between two of these covering parts can be realized.

10. (currently amended) Covering part as claimed in claim 9, wherein the top layer is formed from a high-quality material, in particular a high-grade type of wood, and has a thickness in the range of 1 mm to of at least 1 mm, preferably at least 2.5 mm and most preferably in the order of 4 mm.

11. (previously presented) Method for mutually connecting at least two covering parts as claimed in claim 9, at least one of which is already arranged on a ground surface, comprising the steps of:

- a) orienting a side edge of the second covering part for connecting to the first, already arranged covering part substantially parallel to a free side edge of the first covering part,
- b) moving the second covering part at a distance above the ground surface to the side edge of the first covering part,
- c) rotating the second covering part about an axis parallel to the side edge thereof,

d) placing the tongue of the second covering part at an angle into the groove of the first covering part, and

e) with forming of the connection, lowering the second covering part onto the ground surface by rotating it in the opposite direction.

12. (previously presented) Method as claimed in claim 11, wherein after connection thereof the second covering part is displaced parallel to the side edge relative to the first covering part.

13. (previously presented) Method as claimed in claim 11, wherein after the first and second covering parts have been mutually connected a third covering part is arranged in line with the second covering part, which third covering part is attached by connecting a side edge thereof to the first covering part, and an end edge thereof to the second covering part.

14. (previously presented) Covering for arranging on a ground surface, in particular a floor, comprising:

at least two parallel form-retaining covering parts which are mutually connected along adjacent side edges and which have a backing side directed toward the ground surface and a visual side remote therefrom, wherein the two side edges take a step-like form with an inner and an outer edge segment such that the first covering part has a protruding backing side and the second covering part has an overhanging visual side,

which covering parts are provided with co-acting coupling elements placed along the side edges, wherein the coupling element of the first covering part is a groove which is formed in the protruding backing side and at least open to the visual side, and the coupling element of the second covering part forms a tongue extending from the overhanging visual side at least to the ground surface, which groove and tongue each have an at least partly curved profile, and wherein the groove undercuts the inner edge segment of the first covering part and the tongue protrudes beyond the outer edge segment of the second covering part,

wherein the undercut of the groove and the part of the tongue protruding beyond the edge each have an at least partly chamfered profile.

15. (previously presented) Covering as claimed in claim 14, wherein the inner edge segment of the first covering part and the outer edge segment of the second covering part run substantially transversely of the visual side of the relevant covering part.

16. (previously presented) Covering as claimed in claim 14, wherein the groove and the tongue each form profiles complementary to at least one of the associated edge segments whereby a form-fitting connection between the covering parts can be realized.

17. (previously presented) Covering as claimed in claim 14, wherein the at least partly curved profile forms a segment of a circle.

18. (previously presented) Covering as claimed in claim 14, wherein the other edge segments define a gap in the mutually connected position of the covering parts.

19. (previously presented) Covering as claimed in claim 14, wherein a chamfered surface is defined between the visual side and the side edge of at least one of the covering parts.

20. (previously presented) Covering as claimed in claim 14, wherein each covering part has two parallel step-like side edges, the one of which is embodied with the protruding backing side with groove, and the other with the overhanging visual side with tongue.

21. (previously presented) Covering as claimed in claim 20, wherein each covering part has two mutually parallel end edges, which enclose an angle with the side edges, and which are provided with secondary coupling elements.

22. (previously presented) Covering as claimed in claim 21, wherein the two end edges also take a step-like form such that the one covering part has a protruding backing side and the other covering part has an overhanging visual side, the secondary coupling element of the one covering part is a recess formed on the top of the protruding

backing side, and the secondary coupling element of the other covering part is a protrusion formed under the overhanging visual side.

23. (previously presented) Covering as claimed in claim 14, wherein each covering part is constructed from a relatively thick base layer forming the backing side and, connected thereto, a top layer forming the visual side, and the coupling elements, are formed in the base layer, wherein the top layer is formed from a high-quality material, in particular a high-grade type of wood.

24. (currently amended) Covering as claimed in claim 23, wherein the top layer has a thickness in the range of 1mm to ~~of at least 1 mm, preferably at least 2.5 mm and most preferably in the order of 4 mm.~~

25. (previously presented) Covering part for use in a covering as claimed in claim 14, said covering part having a backing side to be directed toward a ground surface and a visual side remote therefrom, said covering part further having two parallel side edges which each take a step-like form with an inner and an outer edge segment such that the covering part has a protruding backing side along a first one of the side edges and an overhanging visual side along the other, second side edge,

said covering part being provided with co-acting coupling elements placed along the respective side edges, wherein the coupling element along the first side edge is a groove which is formed in the protruding backing side and at least open to the visual side, and the coupling element along the second side edge forms a tongue extending from the overhanging visual side at least to the ground surface, which groove and tongue each have an at least partly curved profile, and wherein the groove undercuts the inner edge segment of the first side edge and the tongue protrudes beyond the outer edge segment of the second side edge,

wherein the undercut of the groove and the part of the tongue protruding beyond the edge each have an at least partly chamfered profile.

26. (previously presented) Covering for arranging on a ground surface, in particular a floor, comprising:

at least two parallel form-retaining covering parts which are mutually connected along adjacent side edges and which have a backing side directed toward the

ground surface and a visual side remote therefrom, wherein the two side edges take a step-like form with an inner and an outer edge segment such that the first covering part has a protruding backing side and the second covering part has an overhanging visual side,

which covering parts are provided with co-acting coupling elements placed along the side edges, wherein the coupling element of the first covering part is a groove which is formed in the protruding backing side and at least open to the visual side, and the coupling element of the second covering part forms a tongue extending from the overhanging visual side at least to the ground surface, which groove and tongue each have an at least partly curved profile, and wherein the groove undercuts the inner edge segment of the first covering part and the tongue protrudes beyond the outer edge segment of the second covering part, and

wherein the other edge segments define a gap in the mutually connected position of the covering parts.

27. (currently amended) Covering for arranging on a ground surface, in particular a floor, comprising:

at least two parallel form-retaining covering parts which are mutually connected along adjacent side edges and which have a backing side directed toward the ground surface and a visual side remote therefrom, wherein the two side edges take a step-like form with an inner and an outer edge segment such that the first covering part has a protruding backing side and the second covering part has an overhanging visual side,

which covering parts are provided with co-acting coupling elements placed along the side edges, wherein the coupling element of the first covering part is a groove which is formed in the protruding backing side and at least open to the visual side, and the coupling element of the second covering part forms a tongue extending from the overhanging visual side at least to the ground surface, which groove and tongue each have an at least partly curved profile, and wherein the groove undercuts the inner edge segment of the first covering part and the tongue protrudes beyond the outer edge segment of the second covering part, and

wherein each covering part is constructed from a relatively thick base layer forming the backing side and, connected thereto, a top layer forming the visual side, and the coupling elements, are formed in the base layer, wherein the top layer is

formed from a high-quality material, in particular a high-grade type of wood, and has a thickness in the range of 1mm to 4 mm.

28. (cancelled)